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ABSTRACT

The 1989 defeat by voters in Fremont (California) of the nation's first measure to fund child care services at the local level provides valuable lessons for generating public support for child care services. Information was gathered from interviews with 23 city policymakers and administrators, from campaign materials, and from participant observation at related public meetings. Fremont is a new city, created in 1956, whose most frequently cited weakness is a lack of identity. Like most Americans, the voters of Fremont did not believe that they were responsible for the care of other people's children. The following issues raised by the child care campaign are discussed: (1) why senior citizens should pay for a program to benefit children; (2) how the measure helped stay-at-home mothers; (3) what benefits the entire community received from child care; (4) how opposition to the measure reflected attitudes toward family values and the use of vouchers; (5) how political factors prevented endorsement by community groups; and (6) how financial contributions reflected the limited range of the campaign. The following lessons are discussed: (1) conduct an attitude survey before placing a measure on the ballot; (2) win voter support by emphasizing the external benefits of the services; (3) consider senior citizen perspectives; (4) manage the campaign effectively; and (5) build coalitions of community support. A list of 30 references is appended. (FMW)

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Creating Public Support for Child Care Services

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, April 1991.

INTRODUCTION

Given the inadequate levels of public financing to provide child care slots for low-income and middle-class children in cities across the nation, there has been surprisingly little discussion of how to create new funding sources to pay for such services. One funding source gathering increased attention is state and local taxes that are earmarked specifically for child care services. An analysis of such tax measures promises to provide valuable information that decision makers can use to fund child care programs within their jurisdictions.

One city that placed a child care measure on the ballot was Fremont, California, a city of 160,000 located at the southern end of the San Francisco Bay. In June 1989, residents were asked whether a $12 annual tax should be levied on each residential unit to pay for child care services. It was the country's first city election ever to be held on the issue. If it had passed, the measure would have raised approximately $1.1 million annually for child care. Funds from the tax would have been used to buy portable facilities on every elementary school site for before- and after-school care, provide vouchers to low-income working parents, pay for innovative projects, recruit and train child care workers, and provide technical assistance to new child care businesses. The measure needed to pass by two-thirds in order to become law. With 21 percent of the electorate voting, more than three-fourths (77.6 percent) opposed the measure, with only 3,678

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votes cast in its favor.

As reported elsewhere (Yeager and Strober, 1989), results of an exit poll conducted on election day show that the major reason for the measure's defeat was that voters did not view child care as an external benefit or public good. The vast majority of respondents voted against the measure because they viewed child care as a private benefit that should be paid for by parents, not by the community at large. A common response given by respondents was, "Why should I pay for other people's kids to be babysat."

While results of the exit poll provide insight into how voters perceived the issue, further analysis is needed to understand how the issue was framed by the local campaign committees that were in support of and in opposition to the child care measure. In this paper, I study the issues that were raised in the campaign, analyze the positions held by various community groups, discuss the campaign by the child care proponents, and make comparisons between the child care measure and school fiscal campaign. I conclude with a discussion of the lessons that researchers, educators, school administrators, and child care advocates can learn from the study of the Fremont Child Care Measure.

RESEARCH METHODS

Data for the study were collected in the six-month period prior to the June 1989 election and were gathered from three sources. First, I conducted interviews with city councilmembers, city administrators, and people whom I identified as prominent proponents and opponents of the measure. Altogether, 23 people were interviewed, five of whom were interviewed twice. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes. Except for three people who chose not to have the interview recorded, all the interviews were taped. Transcribing these tapes generated approximately 500 double-spaced typed pages.

Second, I collected materials that related to the campaigns,

including pamphlets and information items produced by the city, literature produced by the campaigns, and newspaper and magazine articles. By the end of the campaign, I had several folders filled with these types of materials.

Third, I gathered material through participant observation. I attended 10 meetings of the Citizens for Quality Child Care (CQCC)--the committee formed to support the measure--, a city council meeting, a town hall meeting sponsored by the mayor, a press conference sponsored by the proponents, a debate conducted by the Fremont Chamber of Commerce, a meeting held by the Fremont chapter of the California Teacher's Association, and a meeting jointly held by the city council and the Fremont Unified School Board. In addition, I went on a tour of four child care centers with a representative from CQCC, attended a meeting for volunteers in support of the measure to introduce them to the campaign, a training session for CQCC volunteers on how to conduct phone calls to potential voters, and a meeting of the four people who were in charge of the telephoning. I also attended the victory parties for the proponents as well as for the opponents. Lastly, I flew to Riverside, California with the mayor of Fremont the Friday after the election to listen to his speech to a child care conference. This gave me the opportunity to interview him at length on the plane, as well as to hear how he explained the issues and the results of the election to an audience largely unfamiliar with the measure.

All the people who consented to talk with me were told that their interview would be anonymous and confidential. Thus, names and titles are seldom given. The only exception to this is when information was gathered at a public meeting or hearing, or from a newspaper article. For example, people who spoke at a city council meeting are identified by name. This includes city councilmembers and the mayor. To protect the anonymity of my sources, I usually refer to people in such generalities as "a member of the opposition," or "a city hall insider."

In terms of obtaining access to information about the two

campaigns, I was more successful with the proponents than the opponents. I am not sure why this was true because I did not initially know the people involved in either campaign nor did they know me. I felt that I won the confidence of the CQCC members early on and that they knew they could discuss the campaign with me without fear of my revealing the context of the conversations. On the other hand, I think that the opposition was always suspicious of my motives and felt I would knowingly or unknowingly pass on information. Although I had access to the leader of the opposition, I was not able to interview several of his colleagues until after the election. While this hampered data collection to some degree, it did not put the study in jeopardy because, generally, I was able to collect the essential information I needed on the opposition from the opposition leader or from other sources.

A Word about Fremont

Before beginning, it is important to say a few words about the type of community in which the political activity took place. According to city documents, Fremont is a modern boomtown, with the second fastest growth rate in California cities over 100,000. Compared to California as a whole, Fremont's population is somewhat younger, more affluent, and more Anglo. The median age of its population in 1980 was 28.2 years, as compared to 29.9 years for California (U.S. Census Bureau, 1982, Table 14). The average per capita income in 1985 was $13,467, compared to $12,292 for California (U.S. Census Bureau, 1988, Table C). In 1980, 83.7 percent of its population was Anglo, as compared to 76.2 percent for California (U.S. Census Bureau, 1988, Table C.)

Information furnished by the Fremont Unified School District shows the ethnic breakdown of its 26,394 students as follows:

Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
Anglo	17,630	67.3
Asian	3,124	11.9
Hispanic	2,897	11.0
Filipino	1,082	4.1
Black	933	3.6
Vietnamese	274	1.0
Native Americans	189	.7
Pacific Islanders	74	.3

Politically, fifty-three percent of the voters are Democrats and 34 percent are Republicans, giving Fremont a higher percentage of registered Democrats than the statewide average of 51 percent. In the November 1988 election, Fremont supported George Bush over Michael Dukakis by a slightly smaller margin than the state's 51 to 48 percent margin. (Nationally, Bush received 54 percent of the vote.) In 1987, a school bond measure failed to receive a two-thirds majority by less than four percentage points. There is nonetheless a conservative political faction in Fremont, small in number, but quite active and politically astute. They helped organize the campaign against the measure because they believed, in part, that the child care initiative was yet another case of misguided action by the city council's liberal majority.

Lastly, Fremont is a new city, having been created in the 1956 when residents in five unincorporated towns voted to incorporate. Because it is a new city, Fremont does not have much of a history or a unique character. In the city's strategic plan (City of Fremont, 1989), the number one weakness mentioned was its poorly defined identity. "To outsiders and even to many residents, Fremont does not have a strong identity that distinguishes it from its suburban neighbors" (p. 13).

FINDINGS

In this section, I discuss the issues that were raised in the campaign. One such issue was age: Why should seniors pay for a program to benefits children versus why should young adults pay

for programs to benefit seniors? Another concerned stay-at-home parents: Why should self-sacrificing non-working parents pay a tax that benefits working parents versus why should parents who can afford not to work penalize parents who must work? Additional issues that were raised in the campaign concerned child safety, child care as a public good, family values, and the cost of the measure. Following this discussion, the positions held by various local groups--including the school district and the PTA--are analyzed.

The Age Issue

In my interviews, supporters of the measure mentioned three issues that they thought would be the most convincing to seniors. The first was crime, the second was equity, and the third was the responsibility that grandparents have for their grandchildren.

Despite the need to convince seniors to support the measure, proponents did not deal directly with the age issue in any of their literature. In fact, the only reference made in their campaign pieces about why seniors should support the tax was in their brochure. Their argument was that child care--like senior centers--should be paid for by everyone:

> Together, we have built parks, libraries, schools and senior centers. We maintain our roads. We hire police and fire fighters to protect our lives and property from crime and disaster. Now we can enhance our quality of life even more...by providing a safe world for Fremont's children.

In a question and answer sheet produced by the proponents, campaign leaders told their volunteers that when asked how seniors would benefit from the tax, they should respond by saying, "It provides better child care for their grandchildren, is an investment in the next generation, reduces teenage delinquency and, over the long term, unemployment and crime."

Opponents, on the other hand, were straightforward in presenting their case to seniors. They stated the unfairness of the tax to seniors in their ballot argument and rebuttal

statement, as well as highlighted the issue in all their campaign literature. As stated in their flyer, "Low-income seniors should be exempt from this tax. But they are not! Let's stop Measure B from taking any tax dollars from seniors on social security or fixed incomes for a system they will never use."

Opposition leaders believed that their best argument against the tax was its unfairness to seniors. Leaders determined this at the onset of the campaign when they compiled a list of arguments against the measure and asked friends to rate their effectiveness. Their survey showed that the senior issue was the most effective. However, in their literature the issue was listed second, with the first being that "needy kids are being shortchanged." When asked why it was not the first issue listed, I was told, "If I recall correctly, at one point we had these two switched around, but then we thought, well, this was a more effective way...Whatever we wanted to say we had to make it clear that we are concerned about kids."

The treasurer of the opposition campaign was a member in the local chapter of the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP), and whenever he was quoted in the newspaper he was listed as being from AARP. An example of a typical quote from him appeared in an editorial in a local newspaper (Jabobs, 1989): "We shouldn't tax people on fixed incomes for something they won't benefit by."

The spokesperson and principal organizer of the opposition was a family counselor named Michael Samson. He spoke often about the inequity of the tax to seniors. In one newspaper article he was quoted as saying that senior citizens will oppose the measure because it is a service they will not use (Fremont Argus, 1989a). This sentiment was reflected in a comment by a councilmember who said the measure was going to lose because there was too much opposition from older people. "Some of it's philosophical, you know, why is the government deciding to take care of the kids; why are they getting involved in child care; why are they doing this and that? I raised mine, why don't you

raise yours?"

An AARP representative that I interviewed strongly questioned the assumptions made by the proponents about the benefits that seniors would receive. In response to the argument that the measure would relieve grandparents of taking care of their grandchildren, he said:

> That's a fallacy. I don't believe that a majority [babysit their grandkids.] Have they taken a survey to see how many grandparents are doing this? They don't really go out and find this stuff out, getting numbers and figures. Get some information and then they should go out and make their pitch. But they don't, so how can they make a statement like that?

The AARP representative also questioned the ethics of the proponents to raise the issue of child kidnappings. Calling them scare tactics, he said, "So where are we safe nowadays? Look at the Stockton massacre. That happened at a school. Beside, kids have been kidnapped since day one. Look at Charles Lindbergh's kid. If you're worried about your kid, mom, then stay at home."

In a town hall meeting held by the mayor to discuss a wide variety of issues, hostility surfaced when the child care measure was raised. A senior in the audience asked, "Why should everyone, including seniors, have to pay a tax that benefits only a few?" Then, a young women stood up and, instead of waiting to be recognized as is the custom, said in a loud voice, "I paid for the senior recreation center and I don't use it. Why should I pay taxes to pay for it?" The mayor responded that he pays for the paramedics service which he does not use, but that paying for services used by the whole community is the right thing to do.

As the campaign wore on, there was growing resentment by supporters toward the position taken by many seniors. Proponents felt that seniors were out of touch with reality and that they did not understand the hardships on young families. In addition, they believed seniors were selfish and, although beneficiaries of public programs, were unwilling to help others. Said one city hall interviewee:

> They may think that they paid for their Social Security but they didn't. That's not how Social Security works. It's not a retirement fund, it's a welfare program.

Said another:

> One of the interesting things about seniors in places like California and Arizona is that the ones who are the most militant are the ones who moved there when they retired and never paid any taxes to the community. I remember Bill Gisler when he was the mayor of Santa Clara. He called them a bunch of cry babies. That man had more nerve than I have.

When the ballots were counted, some proponents of the measure were quick to single out seniors as the group that was most responsible for the measure's defeat. The mayor in his Riverside speech said, "The senior community to a person, essentially, almost to a person, said we aren't paying for someone else's baby sitting. I raised my children, why can't they raise theirs." With 77.6 percent of voters voting no, responsibility for the defeat of the measure could not be laid at any group's doorstep, even though the exit poll showed that of those voters who gave their age as being between 50 and 59, 82.1 percent voted no, and of people age 60 and over, 82.6 percent voted no.

Stay-At-Home Mothers

The question of how the measure helped stay-at-home moms was a difficult one for proponents to answer. The best they could do was say (as they did in their ballot argument), "Stay-at-home parents will be free of the added worry of being responsible for neighborhood children." This view was reflected in their handout to volunteers on how to answer a question concerning the issue:

> Parents who can stay home and choose to do so should be applauded and supported--but this measure is not about them. In fact, a number of stay-at-home parents choose to bring their toddlers to preschool. Besides that, stay-at-home parents won't have to worry about or supervise latchkey children in their neighborhood. This should lessen their burden.

Heavily laced in the opposition's arguments were the benefit of parental child raising. Said Michael Samson in a newspaper interview, "I think that [stay-at-home mothers] play an invaluable role in our society, and we are losing them at a rate that is alarming" (Fremont Argus, 1988). In another interview he stated, "There is no substitute for the time parents put into their kids" (Fremont Argus, 1989b). Said Jean Lynn, a volunteer in the opposition campaign, in a letter to the editor, "Life is full of choices. One can choose to have children. One can choose to take care of one's own children. Don't point the finger at me and my tax dollars and order me to care for children whose parents have chosen to abdicate their responsibilities" (Fremont Argus, 1989c).

Just as some proponents expressed anger toward seniors, some volunteers were upset at the "holier-than-thou" attitudes of mothers who stayed at home to raise their children. Said one volunteer:

> The only letter to the editor so far as been by a stay-at-home mom, who was outraged that stay-at-home mothers had been denigrated, who wrote, what is this measure going to do for me. I think that is a horribly selfish attitude. I was really angry about it. I thought, if you have the where-with-all to stay at home, you're lucky. Keep your mouth shut.

Another worker in the campaign became upset when she heard one women say how she sacrificed to stay home to raise her kids. "Don't give me that," the worker said to the people she was talking to. "You had the financial luxury of staying home."

Child Safety

A headline in the Fremont Argus (1989d) three weeks before the election asked a question that was on the minds of many parents with young children: "Missing kids: Why here, why now?" The article detailed how eight children who lived within 100 miles of each other had been kidnapped from March 1988 to April 1989. Of the eight children, one was found dead, three were found alive, and four were still missing.

Three of the four missing children lived in small towns near Fremont. The children were Amber Swartz-Garcia, age eight, from Pinole; Michaela Joy Garecht, age nine, from Hayward; and Ilene Misheloff, age 13, from Dublin. Amber had gone outside of her front yard to play jump rope when she was abducted. Michaela was grabbed by a man while she walked to a corner grocery store on a Saturday morning. Ilene left classes at her high school and began walking home. She had not been seen since. Although all eight kidnappings received extensive local coverage, these three cases received the most local attention because they were closest to Fremont and because they were still unsolved.

It would have been impossible for the kidnappings not to have played a role in the campaigns. The first kidnapping occurred shortly after the council's original decision to place the measure on the ballot. Another occurred the same week that the council decided to postpone the election. The last of the eight kidnapped victims was abducted two months before the election and was found murdered shortly thereafter.

Proponents knew that they had a potent issue with the abductions. Said one strategist for the campaign:

> Our best selling point is the preventative medicine angle, that these children are out there...and they need to be protected. This is as obvious as it can be on the face of it. And whether people believe that or not is another story. I don't know how they can escape it, from reading it in the newspaper.

Said another person:

> Six and seven-year-olds walking home--not just the kidnapping thing--but getting hurt. Accidents in your own home when the kid is left alone. So the whole concept of providing a safe environment. Everyone is really concerned about that.

The kidnappings were an integral part of the "safe world" theme of the campaign. While proponents were aware that they could not appear to be taking advantage of the tragedies, they often made references to the abductions. In their ballot argument, they mention that kids "keep getting snatched from

their neighborhoods." In their flyer, they state that after-school programs "will end many concerns about injury, kidnapping, and delinquency." Finally, in their campaign brochure, proponents wrote:

> Fremont's children should live in a world that is safe and caring. A place where they can learn the right things and grow the right way.
>
> That's not the world outside our doors. That's a scary world. Filled not just with imaginary monsters, but real ones. Drug dealers. Criminals. Kidnappers.

Opponents usually kept an arm's distance from the safety issue. When they made any reference to safety, it was how the lack of written quality standards put children in jeopardy. The single exception to this was a statement in their rebuttal argument. They wrote that Measure B promoters were "wrong to use scare tactics about snatched children. Measure B won't stop child snatching. Who do they think they're kidding?"

Opponents had contemplated countering with a child endangerment argument of their own. One leader wanted to bring up the issue of child abuse at child care centers. However, the idea was quickly rejected. Said another opposition leader:

> I said [to the person], I won't buy that because I don't think it's an issue in this campaign at all. Mostly because I live in the arena that says people are already paranoid enough that we don't need to make that an issue. That would be very unfair...I was not willing to use sexual abuse and such as a big banner or a hot button because I felt it's been over propagandized with the press and such.

The families of the kidnapped children saw the child care campaign differently. In a move that would have left the toughest of campaign managers mumbling, the mother of Michaela chose not to back the measure after being asked to do so. Said Mrs. Garecht in a newspaper article, "For one thing, it has nothing to do with child abductions. I don't want people to capitalize on what happened to Michaela in order to support their political agendas" (Fremont Argus, 1989e).

Mrs. Garecht's comments did not end there. In what can be considered an even more damaging statement, the newspaper article went on to say:

> Garecht added that she is a stay-at-home mom who was forced to make many sacrifices to watch her children, and is opposed to subsidized child care, except in the cases of single mothers who need to work.
>
> "I believe very strongly in staying home and taking care of my own children," Garecht said.

Fortunately for the measure's proponents, two Bay Area foundations for missing children endorsed the measure. One was the Kevin Collins Foundation for Missing Children, which is well known throughout the country. The co-president of the foundation and Kevin's father, David Collins, said in the newspaper article, "A lot of the more serious [threats against children] are on the way home from school."

The other foundation in support of the measure was the Amber Swartz-Garcia Foundation. Al Garcia, Amber's father, said, "We see our government as basically being non-supportive of children's issues. So it has become necessary for us as communities to take it upon ourselves to see what we can do for our children." The article went on the say that Mr. Garcia conceded that child care centers will not prevent kidnappings because many kidnappers stalk the children they abduct; therefore, the best prevention is for adults to report to the police any suspicious people in they see in their neighborhoods.

Quoted in the article were Paul Miller, treasurer and co-chair of the Measure B campaign, and the mayor. Said Miller, "I think that it's an indicator that child care is an issue of safety of young children, and I think that has been an issue on the minds of parents as of late." Mayor Morrison said, "If you've got little kids running around without any supervision, that issue has got to come up."

The Cost

The volunteers who were running the campaign in favor of Measure B were told by local councilmembers and political operatives that the child care measure would be won or lost on the tax issue. Although this did not turn out to be the case, leaders in both camps felt it was true, and planned their campaigns accordingly. This is why proponents chose as their logo three copper pennies, which were prominently displayed on their literature, street signs, and door hangers. The logo of the anti campaign was a giant lemon with the words "The $27 million lemon" written inside. It, too, was the dominant graphic symbol on their literature and street signs.

Proponents believed that voters were more concerned about paying additional taxes than about where the taxes would go. Said a leader of the Measure B forces:

> People are basically anti-tax, and the real issue for most voters is not going to be the issue of child care or whether the plan is good or bad--the issue is going to be what is it going to cost me. And what we have to sell them is that it's a lousy three pennies a day, and most people when they hear that are going to say, well, I won't even stop on the sidewalk to pick up three cents, and that's 90% of the folks.

The pro campaign tried very hard to downplay the burden of the tax. "Pennies a day...to protect the treasures of a lifetime. Our children," read the concluding line of their rebuttal argument. Their campaign brochure read, "With Measure B, the entire community shares the cost of quality child care. Developers pay a fee on new developments, business taxes are moderately increased, and each household pays $12 a year. Aren't Fremont kids worth 3 pennies a day?"

Opponents leaped at the chance to disclose the lifetime cost of the measure. By multiplying the $1.8 million total annual cost of the entire program (not just the amount to be collected by the tax) by the 15-year life of the program, they derived the $27 million figure. As stated in a campaign piece: "True cost disguised. Promoters of Measure B say three pennies a day, but

it adds up to $27,000,000--the most expensive city day care plan in the country."

Child Care as a Public Good

The argument that child care is a public good from which the whole community receives benefit was not stressed by campaign proponents. This does not mean that the public good argument was completely absent from the campaign. When it was raised, usually it was from people not associated with the campaign. For example, a columnist for the San Jose Mercury, Joanne Jacobs, relied on it heavily in an editorial supporting the measure (Jacobs, 1989). Jacobs' position was that child care was a needed service that cities should provide. In much the same way as proponents did with their campaign brochure, Jacobs began her article by writing:

> Young people play softball in the city park. Old people eat lunch at the senior center. Swimmers splash in the city pool. Readers browse in the library. Joggers run in the park. Everybody's taxes pay for it.
>
> Next month, Fremont will vote on a new sort of city service: child care.

The editorial details how the measure would work, and presents the views of proponents and opponents. After discussing the pros and cons, Jacobs says she supports the issue because "children will benefit from staying at a familiar place, with their friends, instead of catching a bus and riding across town to a new location and a new group of kids." In addition, "Fremont seniors might benefit from the absence of latchkey kids hanging around in their neighborhoods." She concludes that "libraries, parks and senior centers make a community a better place to live. Now, add child care."

Another person who raised the public good argument was Mario Muniz, an administrator from the California Department of Education's Child Development Division. During a press conference called by the proponents shortly before the election,

Muniz stated:

> When we talk about child development programs, we are talking about prevention programs that are going to generate savings at a future time for the local government in terms of reducing drop-out rates, improving academic achievement, reducing teen pregnancies, juvenile delinquency. These are all proven methods that can improve a local community.

After the press conference, Muniz expanded upon his comments with a reporter. He is quoted as saying, "We are talking about prevention programs that are going to produce savings. If we invest the money in front, it's going to lower the end costs and increase productivity because those kids will be employed" (Fremont Argus, 1989b).

Muniz's comments are more detailed than Jacobs' in explaining how the public would benefit from child care. The argument he gives is an economic one: Child care, like public schools, contribute to economic growth and full employment. Also, child care serves the nation and communities by addressing a variety of social needs. While the economic argument is more tenuous for child care than for public schools, this may change as researchers better understand the impact that high quality child care has on improving the social and cognitive skills of young children.

Family Values and Vouchers

As can be seen from their literature, the opposition had a smorgasbord of arguments against the measure. These included that the measure was too costly, that it was poorly conceived, that there were no quality standards, that too little money went to help low-income families, that seniors should be exempt from paying the cost, that parents who can afford child care should not be subsidized by taxpayer dollars, and that the children of Fremont deserved a better program. Two other issues which never made it on the list of the opposition's arguments but which existed just below the surface dealt with family values and the

use of vouchers.

In regard to family values, the very name of the campaign committee opposing the measure revealed its religious and political philosophy--the Pro-Family Coalition for Better Child Care. Not only were several of the campaign's key leaders fundamentalist Christians, but half of the volunteers in the campaign shared these beliefs. When I asked one of the leaders what her perspective on the issue was, she said, "I would say that I come at it from the Christian perspective of being very wary of government intervention into the nurturing and care of children."

One opposition leader saw the campaign as a crusade to protect family values in Fremont. She said:

> We want to preserve family values here in Fremont because I think there is a very large contingency of traditional families here in Fremont and the family is being slowly eroded away. It's being constantly told you are no longer significant, you are no longer worthy of being the backbone of the country. The government is constantly trying to step in and legislate away people's responsibility for their actions and for their individual choices, and I think Fremont is saying we will take care of our family traditions and we will as family take care of our children.

As the opposition's campaign gained steam, the "family values" theme became more prominent. By election night, it had become the dominant theme. Said Michael Samson in a newspaper interview, "It's a resounding victory for those family values that have gotten us this far" (New York Times, 1989).

In regard to vouchers, Christian leaders were opposed to them because parents could not use them for pre-schools which had a religious component. One leader saw the voucher system as taking away the "parents' choices of what school they could send their children to."

Connected to the lack of choice imposed by the vouchers was the general distrust many fundamentalists have toward government. As expressed by one leader, "Once the government gets involved, they start handing down all their regulations--you can't pray

before you eat, you can't pray in the morning, you can't have a little Bible story. They legislate God right out of the picture."

Leaders were quick to say that they were not opposed to vouchers per se; just the restrictions of where vouchers could be used. This argument arose in the recent debate on the ABC bill, too. It appears the controversy will continue until a compromise is reached on whether government funds can be spent on pre-schools that have religious instruction.

Group support

Proponents and opponents of Measure B vied for the support of several organizations in Fremont. These included the Chamber of Commerce, the Fremont Unified School District, and the PTA. A brief discussion of the endorsement process of these groups is presented below, along with a description of the lack of support for the measure in the child care community.

Chamber of Commerce

When the council first decided to put the measure on the ballot, the chamber stated that it agreed with the measure in concept. However, when it came to a formal endorsement, the chamber was neutral.

Although both campaigns lobbied very hard for the chamber's support, the opposition played a better game of political hardball than did the proponents. Opponents were able to "stack" the committee that made the formal recommendation to the board of directors. When the committee voted, the outcome was overwhelmingly against the measure. The reason the committee gave for its recommendation were based on the following inadequacies:

* A sunset clause of 15 years, five years more than proposed by the chamber.
* Inadequate resources provided for low-income families.
* Quality standards not specifically addressed.

* No provision made for tax incentives to businesses which provide child care benefits, facilities, or assistance to employees.

* Created a double or even triple tax in some instances.

Despite the recommendation from its public affairs committee to oppose the measure, the chamber neither supported or opposed the measure. The by-laws of the chamber state that a two-thirds majority of the board of directors is needed for the chamber to take a position on a ballot measure. The directors were evenly split, however, creating the stalemate.

Fremont Unified School District

Two years previously, the Fremont Unified School District had placed a school bond measure on the ballot; however, it failed to receive a two-thirds majority by less than four percentage points. Knowing that the school district was planning to place the bond measure before the voters again, the council discussed the idea with school officials of holding an joint election. The school district decided against the plan for several reasons. First, school officials believed that the odds of their measure passing would be decreased by having another tax measure on the ballot. They secretly believed that the child care measure might lose and they did not want to jeopardize the bond measure's chances by being on the same ballot. Second, school officials did not want to offend any of the opponents of the child care measure who had been active in their bond measure campaign, including two councilmembers and the main leader of the opposition.

When I asked one councilmember if he was surprised that the school district decided against putting its bond measure on the ballot, he said:

> Surprised isn't the word. Disappointed. Very disappointed is probably better. We thought if we could tie [the child care measure] to the bond election we could get all these kid groups working together, people for the schools, people for before-schools--it

would have been a great effort. But they didn't think so. Maybe they were right. We tried to figure the enthusiasm for all of the kids, the parents coming at the end of the school year, nobody has gone on vacation yet--we would have a lot of things going. But the school district backed away.

Aware of the political fallout if they either supported or opposed the measure, school officials hoped they could keep their coalition together by keeping out of the fight. Thus, like the chamber, they stayed neutral. However, school officials engineered it so there was never a formal vote taken by the school board.

The PTA

The PTA's decision to oppose the measure caught the proponents by surprise. Politically, it was very damaging, and it seriously called into question the credibility of the measure. Opponents, who lobbied PTA leaders very hard, took advantage of the PTA's opposition by including the group's official statement on one of their mailings. The statement read, "Fremont Council PTA regretfully opposes Measure B as written, due to its ambiguity; however, we recognize and endorse the concept of child care for those in need."

There were several reasons why the PTA opposed the measure. The PTA had been overlooked in all aspects of the measure and they felt ignored. They did not have a member on the task force nor on the technical advisory committee. PTA leaders believed that had their concerns been addressed then perhaps they would have endorsed the measure.

Other reasons were more substantive. For instance, the PTA was worried that the portables would take up valuable space on the school grounds without alleviating the overall demand for after-school care. Also, the PTA had concerns about various aspects of the measure, including which children would be eligible for the service. They also did not believe that seniors should have to pay for the program.

Even with these reasons, I was still unclear as to why the PTA would oppose the measure. I pressed a PTA representative further on this point and was told:

> We actually should be supporting the city doing this kind of thing, and in most respects we would. It's just that there are a lot of unanswered questions. It comes down to if this is good for kids and we say it's not. We would almost rather have kids at home in a latch-key situation in their own safe environment rather than put them in a situation where there is one teacher and 50 kids and nobody is looking out for them. Just because it's state licensed doesn't mean that it's good.

Many of these arguments were used by Samson. This is not surprising as Samson was good friends with PTA members, having worked with their membership on school issues. My speculation is that a primary reason for the PTA's opposition is that Samson was a person they trusted. In addition, he lobbied them extensively on the issue, while the CQCC did not. As to why the PTA did not remain neutral, I was informed, "When it comes to issues concerning children, the PTA does not stay neutral."

The Child Care Community

Support for the measure from child care providers--whether center- or family-based--was strikingly absent. Although most of pro-measure committee members worked in child care, there was no direct support from the larger child care community. A leader of campaign gave this explanation:

> Some of the other centers fear competition in two areas. One is for clients, and the other one is teaching staff. And I share that second concern. We have a deadly time trying to recruit staff. I think it has a major impact if we're talking opening 30 portables with 45, 50 kids in each one, and a ratio of one to 15. We're talking about 120 new teachers that will need to be hired. And where will those teachers come from?

During the campaign, I had the opportunity to accompany a member of the pro measure committee as she went to four different child care centers to solicit their support. Our first stop was

a center which she had visited earlier. During that first visit the owner had not been in, but she had left brochures and street signs in case they were wanted. On our visit, she was told by an employee that the owner did not want either the brochures or the street signs left at the center. Silently, we loaded them back into her car.

At the second center, the director informed the committee member that he neither opposed nor supported the measure. He told her that she could leave the brochures in the hallway, even though she wanted to leave them in the parents' boxes where they would be sure to be seen. The director, however, did not want any parent to be offended by the literature.

At the third center, the director said she was against the measure because she had been told that the only beneficiaries of the program would be city-sponsored centers (she owned a private, for-profit center). In addition, she had a bad experience with the city in trying to get permits and, therefore, did not trust the city government. After the committee member explained that all centers could take advantage of the program, the owner felt much better. She allowed brochures to be left in the office.

The owner of the fourth center spoke little English and seemed confused by the reason for the visit. She had never heard of the measure and I sensed that she was unsure of what to make of it or us. After a brief conversation, she agreed that brochures could be left in the office.

Financial Contributors

Under California law, any group that raises or spends $500 in support of a candidate or a ballot measure must register with the Secretary of State's Office. Once the papers are filed, the committee is required to submit periodic statements listing the name, address, and occupation of anyone who donates $100 or more, or makes an in-kind contribution of $100. In addition, the committee is required to list the name, address and purpose of any expenditure of $100 or more. Although receipts and

expenditures of less than $100 do not have to be itemized, their total sum must be reported. It is from these reports that financial information concerning the campaigns was gathered.

The Pro-Family Coalition For Better Child Care raised a total of $10,020, with $3,835 in in-kind contributions. Of the $7,772 raised, $5,622 was not itemized. Of the receipts over $100, $100 came from the Fremont Republican Assembly, $950 came from the Apartment Owners Association of Southern Alameda County, and $300 from a corporation that builds homes in the area.

It has been my experience in local fundraising that large contributions come from one-on-one solicitation. Any remaining funds come from people who are on the mailing lists of either an organization or a politician, and who receive a letter asking for support. Thus, campaign leaders usually are acquainted with all the people who make contributions. This was the case with the pro and anti Measure B campaigns.

The Citizens For Quality Child Care raised a total of $30,886 with $7,711 in in-kind contributions. Of the $23,175 raised, $6,215 was not itemized. Of the receipts over $100, $3,000 came from a large real estate company owned by city Councilmember John Dutra. Miller, the director of Tri-Cities Children Center and treasurer of the campaign, contributed $700 and loaned the campaign $2,000. The Fremont-based New United Motors Manufacturing, Inc. contributed $1,000. Also contributing $1,000 were a law firm, a large development corporation, an ambulance company, and a bank. Most of these contributions were given not out of support for the measure but out of support for the councilmembers who favored the measure.

An analysis of the financial contributions is difficult due to the $100 threshold of reporting. Many people give less than $100 to avoid being reported. This occurred because of the involvement--both pro and con--of all four city councilmembers and the mayor. The elected officials were also involved in soliciting funds. This is because they had the expertise and connections to raise the money that the volunteers in both

campaigns did not have.

The financial reports demonstrate that both committees ran very local campaigns. None of the large donations came from ideological-orientated organizations outside of the area. This was intentional. Neither campaign wanted to risk receiving bad publicity from accepting funds from national organizations.

DISCUSSION OF THE CAMPAIGN ISSUES

Intentionally or not, opponents of the tax measure were able to take advantage of what O'Connor (1980) saw as the multi-dimensional attitudes that people have toward child care. In a survey of the opinions toward child care of 74 people in a Northern California county, O'Connor found that it was not a matter of people either favoring or opposing child care, but of favoring or opposing different aspects of child care. By listing a half-dozen arguments against the measure, opponents triggered people's doubts about child care on a number of levels, such as institutionalized care, child safety, parental responsibility, and government intervention into the family.

In regard to the proponents, I believe they were right to focus on children, although I do not think their "safe world" theme was the most effective. The benefits of early childhood education and the need for a better educated society might have been better arguments. But in any case, it was important that the theme be based on children's needs and not the needs of two wage-earner families or single mothers, as I believe this would have generated less support for their position.

While campaign leaders were fighting their battles on issues concerning the inequity of the tax and the need to protect children, voters had other concerns on their minds, namely why should they pay for the care of other people's children. I found it surprising how often CQCC members mentioned that people voiced this opinion, but still they did not see it as a campaign issue. Said one member of the committee:

> This issue is tricky because of the perception that we hear time and again. The main perception is that why should we pay for child care so women can work and have fancy cars and their big house. Why don't they stay home and take care of their kids. That is going to come up. It has already started to come up.

Member of the Pro-Family Coalition were receiving the same, strong signals. I asked one campaign organizer what messages she had heard during the course of the campaign, and was told:

> I was hearing people say, 'I will not pay for other people's children to be babysat.' I heard from people who said, 'I raised my own, I had to, I didn't have the help.' I heard people say, 'My daughter's having trouble; she works, I know it's hard for her but I still feel it's her responsibility.' Even some saying, 'I help out as much as I can, but it still is the children are the responsibility of the parent.'

From my interviews, I learned that many residents seemed confused by how the measure would work. Some had the perception that child care services would be provided free to the parents who used them. As one CQCC member said, "When you say 'child care tax' they think that they're going to be paying for everyone's child care." Said another member, "We need to have it written somewhere that it's the parents who have to pay. We need to get that written somewhere, some big sky-writer. 'You won't have to pay for the service.'"

The mayor in his Riverside speech mentioned how prevalent this perception was::

> I sat down yesterday with two different people, my boss's secretary and another person, in different conversations, and they said why should I pay for someone else's child care. I said, 'well, you're not paying for someone else's child care. We're going to put facilities there and people are going to pay for their child care.' 'Yeah, but I don't want to pay for someone else's child care.' I said, 'wait a minute, didn't you hear me?' And that was intensive, but they just never heard me. They weren't listening.

<u>Us vs. Them Issues in the Campaign</u>

In the course of the campaign, two "us vs. them" issues

emerged which I believe are of political and social concern. One concerned old versus young and the other concerned stay-at-home mothers versus working mothers.

In terms of the age issue, I believe that the fight between advocates for more public spending for senior programs and advocates for children's programs will become more pronounced. This will certainly be the case if the standard of living for seniors increases at the expense of programs for children, which Preston (1984) says is already occurring. Citing Census Bureau statistics, Preston shows how the incidence of poverty among the elderly was double the national average in 1970 but by 1982 the proportion had fallen below the national average. However, the incidence of poverty among children under 14 in 1982 was 56 percent greater than among the elderly, whereas in 1970 it was 37 percent less. Also, the total federal expenditure on all the major child-oriented programs--AFDC, Head Start, food stamps, child nutrition, child health and all federal aid to education--was about $36 billion in 1984, only one-sixth of federal expenditures on the elderly.

Preston cites changing demographics as an area of concern for supporters of programs for children. While political support for seniors has grown, declining birth rates have meant that fewer households contain children. In 1982, only 37.1 percent of American households contained a child under age 18. In addition to declining numbers of parents with children among the voting-age population, parents themselves are less likely to vote. As far as trans-generational support, Preston points out that although there is evidence that the elderly are in frequent touch with their children and grandchildren, it is also clear that they do not automatically assimilate their off-spring's perceptions and concerns.

The loss of a constituency for children may mean less of a public and private mix in child-raising and more of the responsibility forced upon families. As Preston writes, "We may be returning responsibilities to families not because they are so

strong but because they are so weak" (p. 452).

In terms of stay-at-home mothers, public support for child care will always be hampered by the ambivalence that Americans feel toward putting young children in out-of-home care. On one hand, such programs are needed because economically many women must work and because participation in public life is necessary for women to gain equality with men. On the other hand, Americans believe that it is in the best interest of the child to be cared for within their families until they are ready for school. Skold (1988) states that if both these assumptions are accepted, "then women are faced with the stark dilemma of sacrificing their own economic and personal interests for the sake of their children, or sacrificing the quality of their children's lives in order to meet their own needs" (p. 114).

This situation may partially explain the antagonism between mothers who stay home to raise their children and mothers who work. As Grubb and Lazerson (1982) state, people who stay at home to raise their children may feel a deep hostility toward public programs that help the children of parents that work because these programs "confer on other people's children a favoritism not granted one's own" (p. 80). Grubb and Lazerson add that the greater the intensity of sacrifice for one's own children, the greater the fear that other parent's may not be sacrificing to the same extent.

Mothers who are employed may feel guilty over leaving their children, while mothers who are caring for their children full-time may feel defensive about not working and resentful of the lack of respect they receive even when they are staying home by choice. No where is this cultural ambivalence more pronounced as in attitudes toward women on welfare. Such women are denounced for their dependence on society if they stay home to care for their children, but criticized as bad mothers for leaving their children if they do find work (Skold, 1988).

DISCUSSION OF THE CQCC CAMPAIGN

In this section, I will analyze three critical problems that plagued the CQCC campaign. These are having unclear objectives, ignoring information from the environment, and having a loosely coupled decision-making structure. While it is easy to criticize the CQCC for these failures, research shows that these problems are endemic to many campaign organizations. Next, I review the literature on reasons for the failure and passage of school tax measures, and describe strategies campaign managers consider necessary for victory.

Unclear Objectives

Although winning is the objective of any campaign, campaign leaders have difficultly knowing how best to achieve victory. In the case of the CQCC, its leaders did not know whether their highest priority was to raise money, recruit volunteers, run a clean campaign, or educate the voters about child care. They reasoned that if they did not have the funds, then they could not print brochures. If they did not have volunteers, then they could not distribute the brochures. If voters did not understand the issues, then they would not be persuaded by the brochures.

Political novices often think that the purpose of a campaign is to educate the voters on the issues, believing that voters are "thirsty for solid information" (Hamilton and Cohen, 1974). This is often why campaigners think they need to "educate" voters. Hamilton and Cohen say that political pros would scoff at such ideas.

As novices, CQCC members fell into the "education" trap. Said one CQCC spokesperson mid-way through the election, "I've been trying to educate. That was wrong. My job should be to convince."

Another member of the campaign believed that it was important that they run an ethical campaign. Speaking after the campaign was over, he said:

> You know, it's nice to say that hey we can win a clean campaign, but what good does that do? Sure we feel good that we ran a clean campaign, but I'd rather win. I don't have enough time just to be running a clean campaign so we can get 22 percent of the vote.

Having poorly-defined objectives is not an uncommon occurrence in campaign organizations. Hershey (1974) reported how one candidate complained that the "noble" goal of educating the public during the campaign is a foolish idea. Hershey quoted the candidate as saying, "I don't have any question but that the time to get noble is *after* you're elected. If you get noble *before* you're elected, you can be the most noble, continuously defeated person in the world" (p. 1).

Ignored Information

The CQCC ignored important signals from their environment. As I previously noted, CQCC members reported hearing people say that they did not believe they should pay for other people's child care. In addition, they heard people state that they were confused about the measure. Yet, the committee never addressed either of these issues. If they had, then their campaign literature would have been written to respond directly to these concerns, and in so doing, perhaps changed voters' minds.

Not being attuned to public sentiment may be common among campaigns, however. Hershey (1974) noted that Americans are taught to believe that one objective of political campaigns is to communicate with the voters. In her study of congressional campaigns in Michigan, she noticed that in reality "a great deal of campaigning is directed toward satisfying internal needs, rather than checking on voter responses or seeking voter support. In fact, campaigns often operate without much input from the voters" (p. xvii).

Loosely Coupled Campaign Structure

As was discussed in the section on the structure of the CQCC, four different entities were involved in making decisions--

the city council, city staff, CQCC members, and the consultants. Often, they operated independently of each other. Because the entities were not integrated into one structure, the CQCC never became a distinct organization with representation from each group.

While it is easy to recognize the inherent problems such a structure would have, a reading of the literature on political campaign committees reveals that disorganization may be the rule, not the exception. Said Keys (1964):

> In truth, the campaign organization is a jerry-built and makeshift structure manned largely by temporary and volunteer workers who labor long hours amidst confusion and uncertainty. Assignments of responsibility and lines of authority are likely to be hazy (p. 457).

School fiscal campaigns

To better understand the mistakes made the CQCC, I reviewed the literature on how school fiscal campaigns are conducted. (For studies of school referenda campaigns, see Nunnery and Kimbrough, 1971; Hamilton and Cohen, 1974; Kowalski, 1977; Chang and Albiani, 1987; Reynolds, 1989; Henry, 1987; Case, 1987; Bainbridge, 1988; Whitman et al., 1988; Romanik, 1987; Chopra, 1988; and Puzey, 1986.) These studies and personal accounts show that in cases where referendum measures lost, many were won when placed on the ballot a second time. This intrigued me. Because the pool of voters remained the same in both elections, the difference was caused by how the campaigns were conducted.

The following is a compilation of recommendations presented in the literature by people involved in campaigns that originally lost but subsequently won.

1. Have a well-organized campaign structure. A campaign must have a strong chain of command in order to implement campaign strategies, coordinate activities, and reduce confusion. Thus, the CQCC should have had a steering committee comprised of members from the city council, city staff, and the consultants. No one from these groups should have been able to take action

without the steering committee's knowledge and support.

2. Have commitment from the community. Before embarking on a campaign, it is imperative that many people are committed to its passage. In Fremont, this would have included owners and employees of child care centers and family day homes, as well as their clientele. But as was mentioned, providers had not been consulted about the issue and were unaware of the measure. If future measures are to be successful, it will be essential to organize this constituency, much like teachers and administrators are organized for school financing campaigns.

3. Hire a consultant. It is often the case that people involved in issues do not know how to run campaigns. This was the case in Fremont. Consultants were needed to bring information on how to run the campaign's day-to-day operations and to plan overall strategy.

4. Do a survey. It is recommended that a survey be conducted to understand public sentiment on an issue before placing a measure on the ballot. Also, surveys help campaign organizers to know what elements of the measure to emphasize or clarify. Because no survey was taken in Fremont, the city council and campaign organizers had no knowledge of public attitudes. Such information would have been useful to the campaign.

5. Show how voters will benefit. It is necessary to demonstrate what "payoff" passage of the proposal has for the community and its people. The "what's in it for me" is extremely important for childless couples, the unmarried, and senior citizens who derive no direct benefit from child care services. These concerns were never adequately addressed in the campaign.

6. Find the yes voters. The only way to make sure that potential supporters are aware of the measure is to run a high visibility campaign. These supporters may not always be the ones who vote, so they must be actively pursued. Also, not all supporters may be registered, so a voter registration drive may be necessary. In Fremont, the group that needed to be target

were younger voters who either had children or may have children in the future. However, the people that was targeted by the proponents were those who were regular voters. These people tend to be older rather than younger voters.

PUBLIC POLICY IMPLICATIONS

What are some of the lessons that researchers, educators, school administrators, and child care advocates can learn from the study of the Fremont Child Care Measure? I believe there are several, each of which is discussed below.

* The most important electoral lesson from the Fremont campaign is the need to conduct a survey of people's attitudes toward child care before placing a measure on the ballot. Child care advocates need to know if such a measure could garner enough support and, if it could, how the issue should be framed. Such information would guide campaign leaders in planning their strategy.

* In order to win voter support for child care taxes, future campaigns will have to address voters' concerns about non-parental responsibility and to reframe the debate so as to emphasize the external benefits of child care. Child care serves a variety of social and economic needs, yet, to date, there has been little public discussion of the benefits derived by a community from such programs. Educators and child care advocates need to do a better job in presenting these benefits to the public. If they do not, then people will continue to see child care only as a private good that benefits the parents of the child.

* To avoid future "old versus young" debates, child care advocates need to understand the feelings that seniors have about paying taxes for child care. It is not unreasonable that seniors (or any group of people) would oppose paying for services that they do not think will benefit them. Arguments for government involvement in child care must be framed with the senior citizen perspective in mind.

* School finance measures often lose the first time around because organizers do not know how to run campaigns. After an initial defeat, they realize that managing campaigns takes more expertise and skill than they thought. This is not the best way to learn. People who are thinking about running a campaign need to do their homework before--not after--placing a measure on the ballot. It is sometimes the case that they do not get a second chance.

* Policy makers cannot assume that cooperation will be forthcoming from other governmental entities on child care issues. For instance, the school district in Fremont stayed neutral on the tax issue and the PTA went on record as opposing it. Thus, coalition building must start early, before major decisions are made.

CONCLUSION

Voters in Fremont saw child care as a private good. This may not be an uncommon belief. As a nation, Americans do not believe that they are responsible for the care of other people's children (Grubb and Lazerson, 1982). If future research substantiates this claim, then I believe that the deep-rooted attitudes that Americans have toward child care will not be easily changed.

Given that Americans feel little responsibility for other people's children, what direction should future research take in developing public policy for child care? Clearly, more studies need to be done to see what programs voters are willing to pay for. In addition, because public opinion polls have done a poor job in capturing people's sentiments toward child care, future surveys will need to include more probing questions in order to understand attitudes more fully.

Running any type of campaign is a very expensive and time-consuming activity. Novices are under the impression that placing a measure on the ballot is often all that is required to assure victory. Clearly, this is not true. Continuous and

effective contact must be made with voters in order to make them aware that an issue is on the ballot, and to persuade them to support it. I believe that the city council and CQCC members thought that because child care was in short supply, as well as a source of concern for parents, a measure addressing the problem was enough to motivate the electorate. Many campaigns have been lost on such wrong assumptions.

It is difficult to know if the outcome of the Fremont election would have been different if the proponents had run a better campaign. Because the defeat was so overwhelming, probably no campaign--regardless of how well organized it was--could have changed the outcome. However, the literature clearly shows that many school fiscal elections are lost because of poor campaign management. A well-run campaign often makes the difference between victory and defeat.

The only way to know if the results of the Fremont election can be generalized to other communities is by having more cases to examine. Whether other elections will follow is impossible to know. If other elections do occur, perhaps their organizers will learn from the mistakes made in Fremont. Only after researchers have an opportunity to study election results of well-run campaigns in other communities can voter sentiment toward child care be assessed.

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